

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
MCT-01 ACDA-07 DHA-02 PC-01 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00
OMB-01 ARA-06 COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-02 /098 W
-----291749Z 027311 /50

P R 231630Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1989

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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USUN NY 0010

USIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER/ECJ4-7

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 LUBUMBASHI 0065

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PFOR, PINT, CG

SUBJECT: SHABAN POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE INVASION
AFTER THREE WEEKS

1. SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH SURPRISINGLY LITTLE IS KNOWN BY
LOCAL POPULATION ABOUT THE EXACT NATURE OF RECENT EVENTS
IN WESTERN SHABA. SHABANS ARE SHOWING INCREASING SUPPORT
FOR THE INVADERS. GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OFFICIALS
ARE THE CURRENT REGIME'S STRONGEST AND ONLY STAUNCH
SUPPORTERS. THE ZAIRIAN AND EXPATRIATE BUSINESS
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TECHNICAL COMMUNITIES ARE TRYING TO AVOID ANY ROLE
WHICH WOULD SHOW THEIR LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR MOBUTU,
BUT MAY SHIFT THEIR ALLEGIANCE MORE STRONGLY TO HIM IF
THE INVADERS ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING TOO RADICAL OR SOCIAL-
ISTIC. POORER SHABANS, FARMERS, WORKERS, AND
SOLDIERS HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE UNDER ANY NEW GOVERNMENT.
MOST OF SHABA'S TRIBES SEEM SYMPATHETIC TO INVADERS

ALTHOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS AND BY DIFFERENT DEGREES OF COMMITMENT. WHILE SOME SHABANS SPEAK OF RESURGENCE OF KATANGAN INDEPENDENCE, MOST LOOK TO INVADERS AS OPPORTUNITY TO REPLACE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT AND ITS EXCESSES, THOUGHT THEY LACK SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT NEW FORCE REPRESENTS.

2. NEARLY THREE WEEKS AFTER THE INVASION OF SHABA, SURPRISINGLY LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THE INVADERS, THEIR NUMBERS, OR THEIR OBJECTIVES. THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT CLAIMS IT TO BE ANGOLAN INSPIRED AND LED, USING FOREIGN ADVISORS AND WEAPONS. AT THE OPPOSITE END OF THE SPECTRUM ARE THE STATEMENTS FROM BRUSSELS AND PARIS THAT THE INVADERS ARE ZAIRIANS REPRESENTING ONE OF SEVERAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. LITTLE NEWS IS GENERATED LOCALLY AND EVEN LESS IS PUBLISHED. WORD OF MOUTH QUICKLY SPREADS A BLEND OF FACTS AND RUMORS. DESPITE THESE UNCERTAINTIES, SHABANS SEEM INCREASINGLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE INVADERS, APPARENTLY ON THE GROUNDS THAT ANY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE BETTER THAN THE PRESENT ONE/THE LEVEL OF SYMPATHY IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY BECAUSE THE INVADERS HAVE MADE NO CLAIMS ABOUT THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY FOR THE STATE WHICH THEY SEEK TO INSTALL.

3. THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC AND TRIBAL GROUPS IN SHABA VIEW THE INVASION FROM SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. AMONG THE IMPORTANT ECONOMIC GROUPS ARE THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, MILITARY OFFICERS, THE

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ZAIRIAN AND EXPATRIATE ECONOMIC/TECHNICAL COMMUNITY, AND THE VARIOUS POORER CLASSES OF WORKERS, FARMERS AND SOLDIERS. AMONG THE MAJOR TRIBAL GROUPS ARE SOUTHERN SHABA, THE LUBAS, AND THE SHABAN RESIDENTS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

4. MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED THE STRONGEST SUPPORT FOR MOBUTU. THEY ARE ABLE TO ELABORATE ON THE BASIC ANGOLAN/CUBAN STORY WITH EMBELLISHMENTS SUCH AS THE ENCIRCLEMENT OF CAPITALIST ZAIRE BY SOCIALIST STATES WHO HAVE OFFERED SOLDIERS AND WEAPONS TO STIFLE FREE ENTERPRISE IN ZAIRE, THE GRAND RUSSIAN/CUBAN PLOT TO RADICALIZE ALL OF CENTRAL AFRICA FOR THE COMING STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WHITE SUPREMACIST STATES, AND THE COINCIDENCE OF VISITS BY PDGORNEY AND CASTRO DURING ZAIRE'S CRISIS. IF A NEW GOVERNMENT WERE ESTABLISHED, IT IS MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP WHO WOULD LOSE THE MOST; AT THE VERY LEAST THEIR JOBS AND THE EASY ACCESS TO THE RICH SPOILS THAT

ARE NOW SUCH AN INTEGRAL PART OF ZAIRIAN OFFICIALDOM.
COMPOSED ALMOST ENTIRELY OF NON-SHABANS BECAUSE OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF POSTING OF TOP OFFICIALS OUTSIDE
THEIR HOME AREAS, THIS GROUP HAS CARRIED THE BRUNT OF
THE WAR EFFORT, INCLUDING THE MILITARY DECISION-MAKING
AND THE ATTEMPTS TO RALLY PEOPLE TO THE CAUSE. THESE
EFFORTS, OFTEN HEAVY-HANDED AND POORLY EXECUTED, HAVE
ADDED TO THE TRADITIONAL SHABAN DISLIKE FOR OFFICIALS
KNOWN MOSTLY UNTIL THIS TIME FOR THEIR THEIVERY, HIGH
LIVING, AND PETTY HARASSMENT.

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OMB-01 ARA-06 COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-02 /098 W
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5. BOTH THE EUROPEAN AND ZAIRIAN BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL
COMMUNITIES (INCLUDING IN THIS CATEGORY COMPANIES LIKE
GECAMINES AND SNCZ), FEAR ECONOMIC LOSSES FROM A PRO-
LONGED PERIOD OF INSTABILITY, BUT IN GENERAL ARE SO TIRED
OF THE MISMANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY BY GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS AND THE RAMPANT CORRUPTION, THAT THEY TEND

TO SEE ANY CHANGE AS BEING FOR THE BETTER. IT IS THIS GROUP WHICH IS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE SHADE OF IDEOLOGY OF THE INVADERS. MOST ARE BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY MIGHT BE WORKING FOR STATE CORPORATIONS. IF IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THE

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INVADERS ARE STRONGLY COMMITTED TO A RADICAL PHILOSOPHY OR EXTREME SOCIALISM, THIS GROUP MIGHT BECOME STRONGER SUPPORTERS OF THE STATUS QUO.

6. WORKERS IN SHABA'S TOWNS AND FARMERS IN THE VILLAGES HAVE IN THE PAST FEW YEARS SEEN PRICES RISING MORE RAPIDLY THAN WAGES, FEWER GOODS ON SALE IN THE LOCAL SHOPS, AND CONTINUAL HARASSMENT BY MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS WHO ATTEMPT TO EXTRACT EVERY POSSIBLE BIT OF MONEY OUT OF THEM. WHATEVER STRIKE A NEW GOVERNMENT MIGHT ASSUME, THEY SEE NO POSSIBLE DETERIORATION FROM THEIR PRESENT NEAR-SUBSISTENCE EXISTENCE. THE IDEOLOGY OF THE INVADERS WILL PLAY NO ROLE WITH MOST WORKERS AND FARMERS.

7. ALTHOUGH THE SOLDIERS FOR THE MOST PART ARE DISLIKED BY THE OTHER GROUPS BECAUSE OF THEIR RECORD OF HARASSMENT, THEIR PERSONAL VIEWS ON THE INVASION ARE PROBABLY CLOSER TO THOSE OF THE FARMERS AND FACTORY WORKERS. LACKING ADEQUATE FOOD AND WEAPONS, KNOWING HOW WELL THEIR OFFICERS LIVE, AND OFTEN NOT HAVING BEEN PAID FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THEMSELVES, THE SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO GO TO THE FRONT TO FIGHT FOR A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, MOBUTUISM, WHICH OFFERS NOTHING BUT MORE OF THE SAME POVERTY-STRICKEN SECOND-CLASS EXISTENCE.

8. TRIBAL GROUPINGS FOR OTHER PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO CUT ACROSS ECONOMIC BARRIERS. THE LUANDA/TSCHOKWE PEOPLE, WHOSE HOMELANDS INCLUDE THE ENTIRE WESTERN PORTION OF SHABA OCCUPIED BY THE INVADERS, HAVE BEEN MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE WAR. THOSE LUNDA LIVING OUTSIDE THE OCCUPIED AREAS ARE THE MOST RETICENT TO COMMIT THEMSELVES ON THE INVASION. THE KATANGAN GENDARMES PROBABLY HAVE MORE RELATIVES AMONG THIS TRIBE THAN AMONG ANY OF THE OTHERS. IN ADDITION, THERE

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ARE MORE LUNDA/TSCHOKWE PEOPLE LIVING IN ANGOLA THAN

IN ZAIRE, ALTHOUGH THE MWANT YAV, WHO IS THE CHIEF OF ALL LUNDA/TSCHOKWE PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE BROTHER OF EX-PRIME MINISTER MOISE TSHOMBE, HAS ALWAYS MADE HIS CAPITAL IN KAPANGA, ONE OF THE FIRST OCCUPIED TOWNS. SINCE TSHOMBE WAS REMOVED FROM POWER IN 1965, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE ALMOST NOTHING TO BENEFIT THE LIVES OF THE LUNDA/TSCHOKWE IN WESTERN SHABA. THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES, EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND HEALTH SYSTEMS, (EXCEPT THOSE OPERATED BY MISSIONARIES) REMAIN AMONG THE WORST IN THE COUNTRY. THERE WAS LITTLE GOVERNMENT PRESENCE AT THE TIME OF THE INVASION: ONLY SMALL ZAIRIAN GENDARME UNITS AT THE MAJOR TOWNS, AND PERHAPS BY COINCIDENCE NO PRESENCE OF SUBREGIONAL OR ZONAL OFFICIALS (THE ACTING SUBREGIONAL HEAD AT DILOLO WAS REPORTED SHOT BY THE INVADERS SHORTLY AFTER THEY ATTACKED). THE MWANT YAV HAD WARNED MANY MONTHS EARLIER THAT GOVERNMENT NEGLECT OF THE AREA COULD BRING TROUBLE ONCE THE ANGOLANS CONSOLIDATED THEIR POWER, BUT NOBODY LISTENED. SINCE THE AREA HAD NOTHING UNDER THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT, THE LUNDA/TSCHOKWE HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE. AT THE SAME TIME, THESE TRIBES REMAIN VERY HESITANT TO MAKE OFFICIAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE SITUATION FOR FEAR OF REPERCUSSIONS. MANY OF THOSE ALREADY ARRESTED AS POTENTIAL SYMPATHIZERS ARE FROM THESE GROUPS. THEY MAY NOT LIKE THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT BUT THEY WILL NOT TAKE THE LEAD IN EXPRESSING THEMSELVES.

9. THE PRINCIPAL TRADITIONAL ALLIES OF THE LUNDA IN THE CATANGAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT HAVE BEEN THE VARIOUS TRIBES OF SOUTHERN SHABA WHOSE HOMELANDS STRETCH FROM KOLWEZI TO THE ZAMBIAN BORDER ON THE EAST AND SOUTH, A REGION WHICH INCLUDES THE ZAIRIAN COPPER BELT. SINCE NONE OF THESE TRIBES IS LARGE NOR HAS YET BEEN TAKEN

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OVER BY THE INVADERS, THERE IS STILL LITTLE FERMENT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. THESE PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THE WEALTH OF THEIR AREA GO FOR ALL MANNER OF DEVELOPMENT ELSEWHERE IN ZAIRE AND THE JOBS AT THE MINING TOWNS GO TO THE MORE AGGRESSIVE WORKERS FROM OTHER REGIONS. WHATEVER THE IDEOLOGY OF THE INVADERS, THE TRIBES OF SOUTHERN SHABA DO NOT FEEL THEY HAVE MUCH TO LOSE WITH A NEW GOVERNMENT.

10. THE LUBA WHO INHABIT NORTHERN SHABA AND THE EASTERN KASAI AREA ARE THE PRINCIPAL OTHER TRIBE IN THE SHABA EQUATION. THE LUBAS FROM KASAI HAVE IN THE PAST FORMED THE BULK OF THE WORK FORCE FOR THE INDUSTRIES

OF THE COPPERBELT. TRADITIONALLY, THE LUBA KASAI AND THE LUBA SHABA HAVE NOT GOTTEN ALONG WITH EACH OTHER, IN PART BECAUSE OF THE MORE AGGRESSIVE NATURE OF THE LUBA KASAI. BOTH TRIBES HAVE SUFFERED THROUGH NEGLECT UNDER THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. DESPITE PAST SUSPICIONS, THEY DO NOT SEEM TO STAND FAR APART ON THE PRESENT INVASION ISSUE. BOTH LUBA GROUPS ARE APPREHENSIVE BECAUSE THE KATANGAN GENDARMES WERE TRADITIONALLY ANTI-LUBA. WHILE LUBAS HAVE BEEN INITIALLY MOST HESITANT TO COMMENT ABOUT THE INVASION AND MOST FREQUENTLY THE ONES EVACUATING THREATENED TOWNS FOR THEIR

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MCT-01 ACDA-07 DHA-02 PC-01 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00
OMB-01 ARA-06 COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-02 /098 W
-----291748Z 025609 /50

P R 281630Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
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INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHAGA
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HOMELANDS, THEY HAVE RECENTLY SHOWN SIGNS OF BEING MORE RELAXED ABOUT THE INVASION. MANY HAVE BECOME CONVINCED THAT THE TRIBAL FEELINGS ARE AN ISSUE OF THE PAST AND THAT THE PRESENT CONFLICT IS SOLELY A POLITICAL ISSUEWHICH TRANSCENDS THE TRADITIONAL

TRIBAL BOUNDARIES. THE KASAI LUBA FEEL PARTICULARLY THAT THEIR KASAI HOMELAND HAS BEEN NEGLECTED MORE THAN ANY OTHER PART OF THE COUNTRY(NEVER ANY GASOLINE OR ELECTRICITY, NO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, AND DISCRIMINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES). IF THE INVADERS SHOW THEY ARE NOT
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ANTI-LUBA, THEY WILL FIND STRONG SUPPORT AMONG THIS COMMUNITY, WHICH IS PERHAPS THE SINGLE LARGEST TRIBE IN ZAIRE.

11. THE FINAL SIGNIFICANT GROUPING IN SHABA IS THE VARIETY OF PEOPLE FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY WHO FOR PROFESSIONAL REASONS HAVE MADE SHABA THEIR PERMANENT HOMES IN RECENT YEARS. TRIBAL TIES OFTEN REMAIN STRONG AMONG THESE GROUPS IN SPITE OF THEIR GREATER SOPHISTICATION. THIS IS GENERALLY A MORE INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY WHICH STANDS TO LOSE IF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS DISRUPTED. AS COULD BE EXPECTED, FEELINGS ARE MORE VARIED AMONG THIS COMMUNITY. MOST, HOWEVER, REMAIN ALOOFLY CRITICAL OF MOBUTU. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PRESIDENT'S GREATEST SUPPORTERS COME FROM THOSE SHABANS FROM HIS HOME REGION OF EQUATOR, BUT EVEN AMONG THIS GROUP, ONE COMMONLY HEARS CRITICISM WHICH CONCLUDES THAT THINGS HAVE GOTTEN SO BAD THAT MOBUTU MUST GO.

12. CONCLUSION. SHABANS KNOW LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE INVADERS AFTER THREE WEEKS THAN THEY DID AFTER THREE DAYS. INCREASINGLY, PEOPLE UNCONNECTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT ARE DISCOUNTING THE OFFICIAL VERSION WHICH IMPLIES HEAVY FOREIGN PARTICIPATION. SHABANS SEEM TO HAVE GROWN SUFFICIENTLY TIRED OF MOBUTUISM, THE MPR, ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT, HIGH-LEVEL PROFITEERING, AND THE TOTAL ABSENCE OF ANY GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED LOCAL BENEFITS FROM SHABA'S WEALTH THAT THEY WELCOME ANY FORCE WHICH MIGHT TOPPLE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. FEW SEEM INTERESTED IN TAKING UP ARMS OR EVEN SPEAKING OPENLY ABOUT THEIR VIEWS. FOR THE MOST PART THEY ARE SITTING PASSIVELY, SNICKERING ABOUT THE LATEST ARMY DEFEAT AND LOOKING THE OTHER WAY WHEN THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ATTEMPT TO APPEAL TO THEIR PATRIOTISM. THEY ARE PLAYING A WAITING GAME, HOPING THAT THE ZAIRIAN MILITARY FORCES WILL COLLAPSE QUICKLY, AND WITHOUT BLOODSHED,
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HOPING THAT FOREIGN POWERS WILL NOT PROVIDE THE AID
TO SUSTAIN THE GOVERNMENT EFFORT, AND HOPING THAT
THE INVADING FORCE WILL BRING MORE ENLIGHTENED LEADERS.
THE PERSPECTIVE MAY BE NAIVE, BUT MOST SHABANS FEEL
THERE IS NO PLACE TO GO BUT UP.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INVASIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LUBUMB00065
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770107-0709
Format: TEL
From: LUBUMBASHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770331/aaaabawz.tel
Line Count: 392
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 889faab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3025690
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHABAN POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE INVASION AFTER THREE WEEKS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PFOR, PINT, CG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/889faab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009